

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 6-13 and 15-18 are pending in the present application. No claims are amended, canceled, or added by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-4, 6, 8-13, 15, 17, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,185,629 to Iino (herein "Iino"); and Claims 7 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Iino in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,510,827 to Kubota (herein "Kubota").

Applicant and applicant's representatives thank Examiner Pham for the courtesy of a personal interview extended to applicant's representatives on January 14, 2004. During the interview, differences between the claimed invention and the applied art, and the rejections noted in the outstanding Office Action, were discussed. The Examiner agreed that the claims distinguished over the art of record. However, no agreement regarding allowability was reached because the Examiner felt that further searching was required. Arguments and claim amendments presented during the interview are reiterated below.

Claims 1-4, 6, 8-13, 15, 17, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Iino. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is directed to an image forming apparatus that includes a writing device, a developing device, an upper duct and a lower duct, and a single air intake fan configured to take outside-air into the upper duct and the lower duct. Independent Claim 10 includes similar features.

In a non-limiting example, FIG. 2 illustrates a single air intake fan 60 that takes outside-air into the upper duct 50 and into the lower duct 52.

As discussed during the interview, Iino does not disclose a single air intake fan that takes outside-air into the upper duct and the lower duct. In FIG. 4, Iino illustrates an optical system cooling device 302 (i.e., upper duct), with a fan 223 that draws air into air intake 25b and exhausts air through air outlet 26b. Further, Iino discloses lower duct 31 in FIG. 2A. Applicant respectfully submits that *inside-air*, not outside-air as in the claimed invention, is re-circulated through lower duct 31 by fan 32 and exhausted into the inside of the main housing 10 through duct 34.¹ In addition, duct 31 does not communicate with the upper duct, thus fan 32 does not take outside-air into the upper and the lower duct, as in the claimed invention.

Alternatively, Iino illustrates a lower duct 24 in FIG 3A. Two fans 22 draw outside-air in through air inlet 25a and exhaust air through air outlet 26a. Applicant respectfully submits that duct 24 does not communicate with the upper duct, thus fans 22 do not take outside-air into the upper and the lower duct, as in the claimed invention.

In addition, as discussed during the interview, Iino includes an apparent typographical error in the paragraph at column 4, lines 15-24, which describes the operation of the upper portion of the housing 10, and which incorrectly indicates that ambient air is drawn by fan “22” into the upper portion of the housing 10. As clearly shown in FIGs. 1 and 4, the fan that draws air into the upper portion of the housing 10 is actually fan 223. Further, as shown in FIGs. 3A and 3B, and as described in Iino at column 3, line 65, to column 4, line 4, fan 22 does not draw air into the upper portion of the housing, but through the fixing roller cooling device 301 in the lower portion of the housing. Accordingly, as discussed during the interview, the phrase “fan 22” at column 4, line 17, is a typographical error that should be interpreted to mean “fan 223.”

¹ Iino at column 3, lines 42-46.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1 and 10, and each of the claims depending therefrom, are allowable.

Claims 7 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Iino in view of Kubota. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

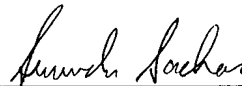
Claims 7 and 16 depend on Claims 1 and 10, respectively, which as discussed above are believed to be allowable. Further, it is respectfully submitted Kubota does not teach or suggest the features recited in the independent claims. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that rejection also be withdrawn.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

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22850

Respectfully Submitted,

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